IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1.  (Canceled)

2.  (Canceled)

3.  (Canceled)

4.  (Canceled)

5.  (Canceled)

6.  (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 5 comprising~~ A method for transmitting a media gateway control command from a media gateway controller to a remote media gateway using a high-level datalink control (HDLC) protocol, the method comprising:

    (a)   generating the media gateway control command;

    (b)   inserting the media gateway control command into an IP packet;

    (c)   inserting the media gateway control command into a command packet, wherein inserting the media gateway control command into the command packet includes forming the command packet having a packet header portion and a packet payload portion, wherein forming the command packet includes inserting a command flag in the packet header portion that indicates a type of payload contained in the packet payload portion and wherein inserting the media gateway control command into the command packet includes inserting the IP packet in the packet payload portion and

inserting a destination interface identifier for the IP packet in the packet header portion;

(d)     inserting the command packet into an HDLC frame; and

(e)     transmitting the HDLC frame to a media gateway using a time division multiplexed (TDM) channel.

7.     (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 5~~ A method for transmitting a media gateway control command from a media gateway controller to a remote media gateway using a high-level datalink control (HDLC) protocol, the method comprising:

(a)     generating the media gateway control command;

(b)     inserting the media gateway control command into a command packet, wherein inserting the media gateway control command into the command packet includes forming the command packet having a packet header portion and a packet payload portion, wherein forming the command packet includes inserting a command flag in the packet header portion that indicates a type of payload contained in the packet payload portion; and wherein inserting the media gateway control command into the command packet includes inserting the media gateway control command in the packet payload portion and inserting a command identifier in the packet header portion for identifying the media gateway control command;

(c)     inserting the command packet into an HDLC frame; and

(d) transmitting the HDLC frame to a media gateway using a time division multiplexed (TDM) channel.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Canceled)

10. (Previously Presented) A media gateway comprising:

(a) a plurality of network interfaces for sending and receiving media streams to and from external networks;

(b) a plurality of voice processing resources operatively associated with the network interfaces for processing the media streams received from the external networks;

(c) a command interface for receiving commands from a media gateway controller;

(d) a controller operatively associated with the network interfaces and the voice processing resources for controlling the network interfaces and the voice processing resources, the controller being operatively associated with the command interface and that differentiates between commands intended for the media gateway and commands intended for a remote media gateway; and

(e) a high-level data link control (HDLC) interface operatively associated with the controller for encapsulating media gateway control commands intended for the remote media gateway in command packets, encapsulating the command packets in HDLC frames, and for forwarding

the HDLC frames to the remote media gateway via a time division multiplexed (TDM) channel.

11.     (Previously Presented) The media gateway of claim 10 wherein the plurality of network interfaces include a plurality of TDM network interfaces for sending and receiving data over TDM channels and wherein the HDLC interface sends the HDLC frames to the TDM network interfaces and the TDM network interfaces send the HDLC frames to the remote media gateway via the TDM channels.

12.     (Previously Presented) The media gateway of claim 11 wherein the TDM network interfaces provide redundant access to the TDM channels and wherein the controller dynamically switches between TDM channels for sending the HDLC frames to the remote media gateway in response to failure of one of the TDM channels.

13.     (Original) The media gateway of claim 10 wherein the plurality of network interfaces include a plurality of packet network interfaces for sending and receiving packetized media streams to and from external networks.

14.     (Previously Presented) The media gateway of claim 10 wherein the HDLC interface encapsulates call control commands intended for the remote media gateway in the command packets, encapsulates the command packets in HDLC frames, and forwards the HDLC frames to the remote media gateway via the TDM channel.

15.     (Previously Presented) The media gateway of claim 10 wherein the HDLC interface encapsulates media gateway maintenance commands intended for the

remote media gateway in the command packets, encapsulates the command packets in HDLC frames, and forwards HDLC frames to the remote media gateway via the TDM channel.

16. (Previously Presented) The media gateway of claim 10 wherein the HDLC interface encapsulates network management messages intended for the remote media gateway in the command packets, encapsulates the command packets in HDLC frames, and forwards HDLC frames to the remote media gateway via the TDM channel.

17. (Previously Presented) The media gateway of claim 10 wherein the HDLC interface inserts a header in the command packet indicating whether a payload of the command packet carries a network management message, a call control message, or a media gateway maintenance message.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Canceled)

20. (Currently Amended) ~~The system of claim 18~~ A system for managing a remote media gateway, the system comprising:

   (a) a media gateway controller for generating media gateway control commands;

   (b) a local media gateway operatively associated with the media gateway controller for sending and receiving media streams to and from external networks;

(c)    a high-level data link control (HDLC) interface operatively associated with at least one of the local media gateway and the media gateway controller for encapsulating media gateway control commands intended for a remote media gateway in HDLC frames; and

(d)    at least one time division multiplexed (TDM) interface operatively associated with the HDLC interface for sending the media gateway control commands to the remote media gateway via a TDM channel, wherein the local media gateway generates network management messages intended for the remote media gateway and forwards the network management messages to the remote media gateway via the HDLC interface.

21.    (Currently Amended) ~~The system of claim 18~~ A system for managing a remote media gateway, the system comprising:

(a)    a media gateway controller for generating media gateway control commands;

(b)    a local media gateway operatively associated with the media gateway controller for sending and receiving media streams to and from external networks;

(c)    a high-level data link control (HDLC) interface operatively associated with at least one of the local media gateway and the media gateway controller for encapsulating media gateway control commands intended for a remote media gateway in HDLC frames; and

(d) at least one time division multiplexed (TDM) interface operatively associated with the HDLC interface for sending the media gateway control commands to the remote media gateway via a TDM channel, wherein the media gateway controller generates media gateway maintenance commands intended for the remote media gateway and forwards the media gateway maintenance commands to the remote media gateway via the HDLC interface.

22. (Canceled)

23. (Canceled)

24. (Canceled)

25. (Canceled)

26. (Currently Amended) ~~The system of claim 24~~ A system for managing a remote media gateway, the system comprising:

(a) a media gateway controller for generating media gateway control commands;

(b) a local media gateway operatively associated with the media gateway controller for sending and receiving media streams to and from external networks;

(c) a high-level data link control (HDLC) interface operatively associated with at least one of the local media gateway and the media gateway controller for encapsulating media gateway control commands intended for a remote media gateway in HDLC frames; and

(d)    at least one time division multiplexed (TDM) interface operatively associated with the HDLC interface for sending the media gateway control commands to the remote media gateway via a TDM channel, wherein the at least one TDM interface includes a plurality of redundant TDM interfaces for redundantly connecting the media gateway controller to the remote media gateway, and wherein the plurality of redundant TDM interfaces are connected to the media gateway controller and wherein the media gateway controller detects failure of any one of the TDM interfaces and switches HDLC frames from the failed interface to any of the other TDM interfaces.

27.    (Canceled)

28.    (Canceled)

29.    (Canceled)

30.    (Currently Amended) ~~The system of claim 18~~ A system for managing a remote media gateway, the system comprising:

(a)    a media gateway controller for generating media gateway control commands;

(b)    a local media gateway operatively associated with the media gateway controller for sending and receiving media streams to and from external networks;

(c)    a high-level data link control (HDLC) interface operatively associated with at least one of the local media gateway and the media gateway controller

for encapsulating media gateway control commands intended for a remote media gateway in HDLC frames; and

(d) at least one time division multiplexed (TDM) interface operatively associated with the HDLC interface for sending the media gateway control commands to the remote media gateway via a TDM channel, wherein the media gateway controller sends the media gateway control commands to the local media gateway and wherein the local media gateway determines whether the media gateway control commands are addressed to the local media gateway or to the remote media gateway.

31. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 30 wherein the local media gateway processes media gateway control commands that are addressed to the local media gateway and forwards the media gateway control commands that are addressed to the remote media gateway.